horsehair attached to the ends. During the music the player from time to time rubs the horsehair with a piece of resin from the gum tree; this serves as rosin. /288/ The amzad skins are often decorated with painted motifs in very vivid colors, or else they are covered with tifinagh inscriptions indicating the name of the owner and bearing love verses for the use of admirers.

Among the Ihaggaren violins are usually large, reaching as much as 40 centimeters in diameter. In Sudanese tribes, on the other hand, they are much smaller, rarely exceeding 25 to 30 centimeters.

The amzad plays an important role among the Tuareg, who really make a true cult of it. Young men go to listen to the girls play it. After they are married, they love to hear their wives, who charm in this way the empty hours of summer evenings. Not playing the amzad is a punishment that the women inflict on the men, and during battles warriors always try to be brave lest their wives or their fiancées deprive them of music. "There will be no amzad," they used to say upon returning from an unsuccessful raid. This prospect was often sufficient to restore their courage and incite them to go efface their defeat.

The ahal. -- At about the age of sixteen, boys and girls have access to adult society and begin to participate in the ahal.

The word ahal means "meeting, conversation, interview." A synonym for it is édéouenné. These musical and literary meetings have a more or less peculiar nature, depending on whether or not they are mixed with asri.

Asri, literally "to run with the bridle loose," means the practice of some very free mores. To live in a state of asri is to exist under conditions which permit one to practice loose mores. Those who can be in a state of asri are pubescent boys and girls, widowers, and divorced people of either sex.

These meetings take place near the camps in the shelter of a wadi, but always out of the sight of old people and respectable people of the tribe. They usually take place before the evening

Chapter II

Circumcision

In Tamashek, "azemhoud-n-baradhen" (circumcision of children) ⵜⴰⵣⵎⵀⵓⴷ ⵏ ⵉⴱⵔⴰⴷⵀⴰⵏ from the verb "ezmahad" ⵣⵎⵀⴷ, to circumcise.

There is no set age for circumcision; generally it is carried out after the age of five.

The operator is summoned to the amazar' (douar), and all the people present take part in the operation, carried out as follows:

The operator holds the foreskin with a bit of "saâf" (djerid or palm leaf) and cuts it with a well-sharpened knife. To cicatrize the wound, it is dusted with leaves of atle (Tamarix articulata) and skins of dried pomegranates ground to powder. Then it is washed with camel urine, and all painful contact is avoided by means of splints held by strings fastened behind the back.

Then there is a feast: a sheep's throat is cut, and it is eaten by the guests.

Chapter III

Puberty

In Tamashek, "tamendjott" ⵜⴰⵎⴻⵏⵊⵓⵜ. As soon as he is of an age to fast, that is to say, as soon as he has reached puberty, the boy begins to wear the "tidjelmoust" ⵜⵉⵊⵍⵎⵓⵙⵜ veil which he will never leave off thereafter.